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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 005067

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/05/2016

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [OVIP](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: NAVY SECRETARY WINTER MEETS WITH MOFA DG KAWAI

Classified By: DCM JOSEPH R. DONOVAN. REASONS 1.4 (B)(D)

11. (C) Summary. Acceptance of new U.S. military assets, efforts to locate a suitable location for night landing practice, relocation of Futenma, and Japanese commitment to operations in Afghanistan and the Indian Ocean dominated the August 28 conversation between Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter and MOFA Director General for North American Affairs Chikao Kawai. Director General Kawai praised cooperation between the U.S. Navy and Japan at all levels and was generally positive that base relocation issues could be resolved in a manner agreeable to both sides. End summary.

Support for Nuclear Carrier, USS Shiloh, PAC-3s

12. (C) Director General (DG) Kawai told Secretary Winter that Yokosuka Mayor Kabaya and Kanagawa Governor Matsuzawa were both in general agreement on accepting a nuclear-powered carrier to replace the USS Kitty Hawk. He felt Mayor Kabaya would be able to deal with any local community groups that were still holding out for financial incentives. Noting that North Korean (DPRK) missile tests in 1998 and again this July had dramatically changed the way most Japanese viewed security issues, he also predicted a warm welcome for the Aegis-equipped USS Shiloh. In his view, bilateral U.S.-Japan exercises off Hawaii involving the Shiloh showed that the two countries could conduct the missile defense mission in a true coalition manner. The U.S. decision to deploy PAC-3s, announced on the heels of the most recent DPRK missile tests, was similarly welcome, despite initial concern that some local groups in Okinawa might protest the deployment as an expansion of the U.S. military presence in Japan. DG Kawai noted that one prominent local group in Okinawa had actually canceled a protest that was scheduled for shortly after the missile tests.

13. (C) Progress on Futenma relocation was more problematic, said DG Kawai, given the prevailing sentiment among most residents of Okinawa that they had been sacrificed for the benefit of Japan's four main islands "for centuries." Okinawa Governor Keiichi Inamine and the relevant local mayors would be meeting with representatives from the central government on August 29 to discuss how to proceed with the consultative process, Kawai said.

14. (C) For DG Kawai, the question of how best to handle Okinawa came down to whether the central government should continue offering financial incentives to Okinawa in the form of subsidies for local projects, as proposed by Minister for Okinawa Affairs Yoriko Koike, or impose a decision unilaterally, the approach favored by Defense Agency Chief Fukushima Nukaga. Characterizing the current approach as a subtle arrangement in which the linkage was implied but never stated, DG Kawai supported Nukaga's view that the policy of offering financial assistance had failed to bring about favorable conditions after all these years and should be dropped.

15. (C) DG Kawai thought Nago Mayor Shimabukuro was actually in favor of the U.S. government's proposal for Camp Schwab, and couldn't understand why Governor Inamine would oppose such a good deal for Okinawa with less than three months remaining in his term. In MOFA's view, it was better to proceed with the plan in order to minimize the risks to local residents posed by continuing to operate out of Futenma.

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16. (C) In the course of relocating U.S. forces to Guam, DG Kawai hoped that Japanese companies would have a large share in construction projects involving U.S. bases, both in Japan and Guam. Two big pluses for Japanese companies were the lower shipping costs and the fact that Japanese companies were familiar with the type of strict typhoon and earthquake resistance specifications required in Guam. He noted that the process of financing their share of the base relocation costs was a new experience for the GOJ, and would require greater reliance on the private sector than in the past.

17. (C) DG Kawai told Secretary Winter he had not gotten any commitments to accept relocation of the carrier air wing from Atsugi NAS to Iwakuni from Governor Sekinari Nii of Yamaguchi Prefecture during a meeting on August 28; however, he interpreted Governor Nii's comments to the press after the meeting to suggest that the Governor had asked Mayor Ihara of Iwakuni to be more realistic. DG Kawai had discussed with the Governor a plan to provide a positive benefit to the local community by instituting four civil aviation flights a day out of Iwakuni. While Mayor Ihara was just elected last month on a platform opposing the plan, his influence seemed to be fairly limited, DG Kawai suggested. Moreover, the majority of city council members seemed to support the plan as a means to gain use of the airport for civilian flights, along with other financial incentives.

18. (C) In DG Kawai's view, Mayor Iwao Yamaguchi of Atsugi City is much more influential than Mayor Ihara and could work to disrupt plans to bring a nuclear-powered carrier to Yokosuka, which he had privately supported, if the fighters were not moved from Atsugi by 2008. Atsugi was nothing but farmland when the base was constructed, DG Kawai noted, but was now a busy suburb of Tokyo and simply too dangerous for regular military use.

19. (C) Discussions are set to identify a permanent night landing practice site within 100 nautical miles of Iwakuni to replace the facilities on Iwo Jima, according to DG Kawai. He noted that the issue was delicate and required discretion, not least because Yamaguchi Prefecture was the home district

of Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, likely to become Japan's next prime minister on September 22. Reminded of the importance of adhering to the 100 nautical mile limit for safety reasons, DG Kawai promised Japan would find a suitable location as close as possible to Iwakuni, but perhaps not within 100 nautical miles. He also noted the importance of getting new appointees from the Abe administration to observe night landing exercises, both at Iwo Jima and on the USS Kitty Hawk, to gain a better understanding of the requirements.

No Movement on Kandahar Road, Tankers to Stay in Indian Ocean

¶10. (C) Secretary Winter expressed frustration over the lack of progress on Japan's portion of the Kandahar Ring Road, citing the project as key to improvements in Afghanistan's economic and security situation and central to everything the U.S. and Japan were seeking to accomplish there. He encouraged Japan to honor its commitment to complete construction by the end of the year and offered whatever assistance the U.S. could provide, including the services of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He said the most recent projections that Japan would not finish building its portion until 2008 had attracted attention at the highest levels in Washington and could create unnecessary stresses in the bilateral relationship.

¶11. (C) In reply, DG Kawai attributed delays to the current security situation, but promised to check into the matter

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further. In the end, he said Japan might have to sacrifice quality in some measure and perhaps opt for using third country nationals to finish the project in a more timely manner. He assured Secretary Winter that support in Japan for coalition efforts in Afghanistan was widespread and bi-partisan, and promised Japan would return to Kandahar for a number of projects when the security situation improved.

¶12. (C) DG Kawai told Secretary Winter he believed press reports that the special law allowing Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Forces to operate tankers in the Indian Ocean was likely to be extended before it expired at the end of October. He believed Abe would continue to support those efforts once he became Prime Minister. MOFA has explained to Diet members that a steady oil supply is important to maintaining maritime security, and that the U.S. appreciates MSDF efforts at the highest levels. That said, he could always use more data on the number of intercepts to overcome opposition arguments that Japan is simply operating a free gas station. DG Kawai especially appreciated information provided by the U.S. to show that Japanese tankers have allowed Pakistani naval forces to increase patrol times. He acknowledged the particular importance of maritime security to an island nation like Japan, especially given the country's near-total dependence on shipping.

¶13. (U) This message has been cleared by Secretary Winter.
SCHIEFFER